

What is Open Fields?

Open Fields targets CRP and associated quality habitats that provide important cover for Montana's game birds.

Montana has lost a significant amount of CRP in recent years, and more is scheduled to expire in the near future.

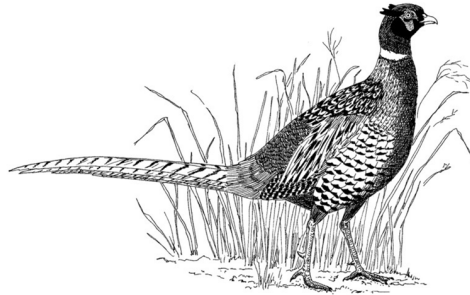
Conservation-incentive programs like Open Fields are geared to help land-owners keep some land enrolled in CRP.

If you would like to be considered for enrollment in Open Fields, please submit an application today!



Applications for enrollment are evaluated and scored by FWP staff. Higher scoring applications are more likely to be enrolled.

Open Fields is made possible through a 2014 Farm Service Agency grant that FWP received to fund "add-on" rental payments on high quality upland game bird habitats enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and where walk-in public hunting access is allowed.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1420 East 6th Ave
Helena, MT 59620
Phone: 406-444-2612
Web page: fwp.mt.gov/ugbep
Email: fwpwld@mt.gov



1200 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$50 cents per copy, for a total cost of \$600.00 which includes \$600.00 for printing and \$.00 for distribution.

OPEN FIELDS FOR GAME BIRD HUNTERS

*ENHANCE WILDLIFE HABITAT
& YOUR CRP PAYMENT*



Program Details

For payment purposes, up to 160 CRP acres may be enrolled per landowner.

- Landowners receive a one-time lease payment of \$5.00 per CRP acre for each year that remains in their CRP contract.
- Open Fields contracts begin September 1 and end January 1 of the year your CRP contract expires.
- Leases do not allow for emergency haying or grazing that is in addition to scheduled maintenance.
- All enrolled acres are open to free walk-in public access for game bird hunting with no further permission needed.

PAYMENT EXAMPLE

If 160 acres of CRP are enrolled for 10 years, the landowner receives an upfront payment of \$8,000 in return for managing the CRP as outlined above.

Make your enrollment offer **more** competitive!

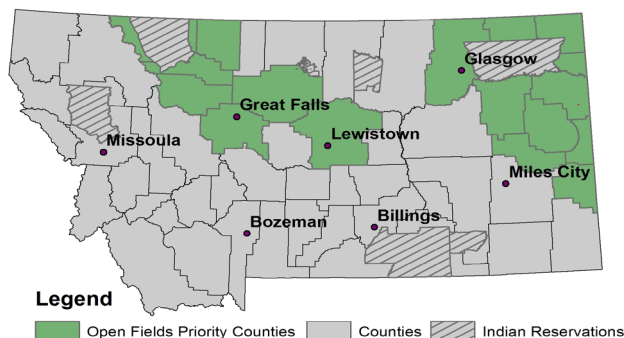
To receive a higher evaluation score, landowners can offer additional CRP or non-CRP acres for walk-in game bird hunting. In some circumstances, these additional acres can help “square-up” the access area.

Additional acres are not subject to Open Fields management restrictions.

Eligibility

To be considered eligible, the following criteria must be met:

- All enrollments must be on private land that is legally accessible for walk-in game bird hunting
- A minimum of 3 years remaining on USDA CRP contracts
- CRP that is located within priority counties (green shading) will receive additional evaluation points
- Due to different management jurisdictions, lands within Indian Reservations do not qualify.



Lands not eligible include the following:

- Lands enrolled in Block Management (BM) in 2014
- Non-BM lands immediately adjacent to a Block Management Area under the same ownership.
- Lands part of an active Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program contract, unless the contract terminates on or before August 30, 2015
- Stands of grass dominated by crested wheat-grass or smooth brome.



Open Fields signs are erected by FWP staff to mark project boundaries.



Thanks to FWP's partners and cooperators, over 32,000 acres have been enrolled in Open Fields since 2012!



Open Fields has been a great fit for me and my family. The bird hunters like the walk-in access, and I'm glad I can keep my land in CRP.

Ron M,
Shelby, MT